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THE

Divine Law concerning Marriage:

A

DISCOURSE

BY

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REV. WILLIAM A. McCORKLE, D.D.,

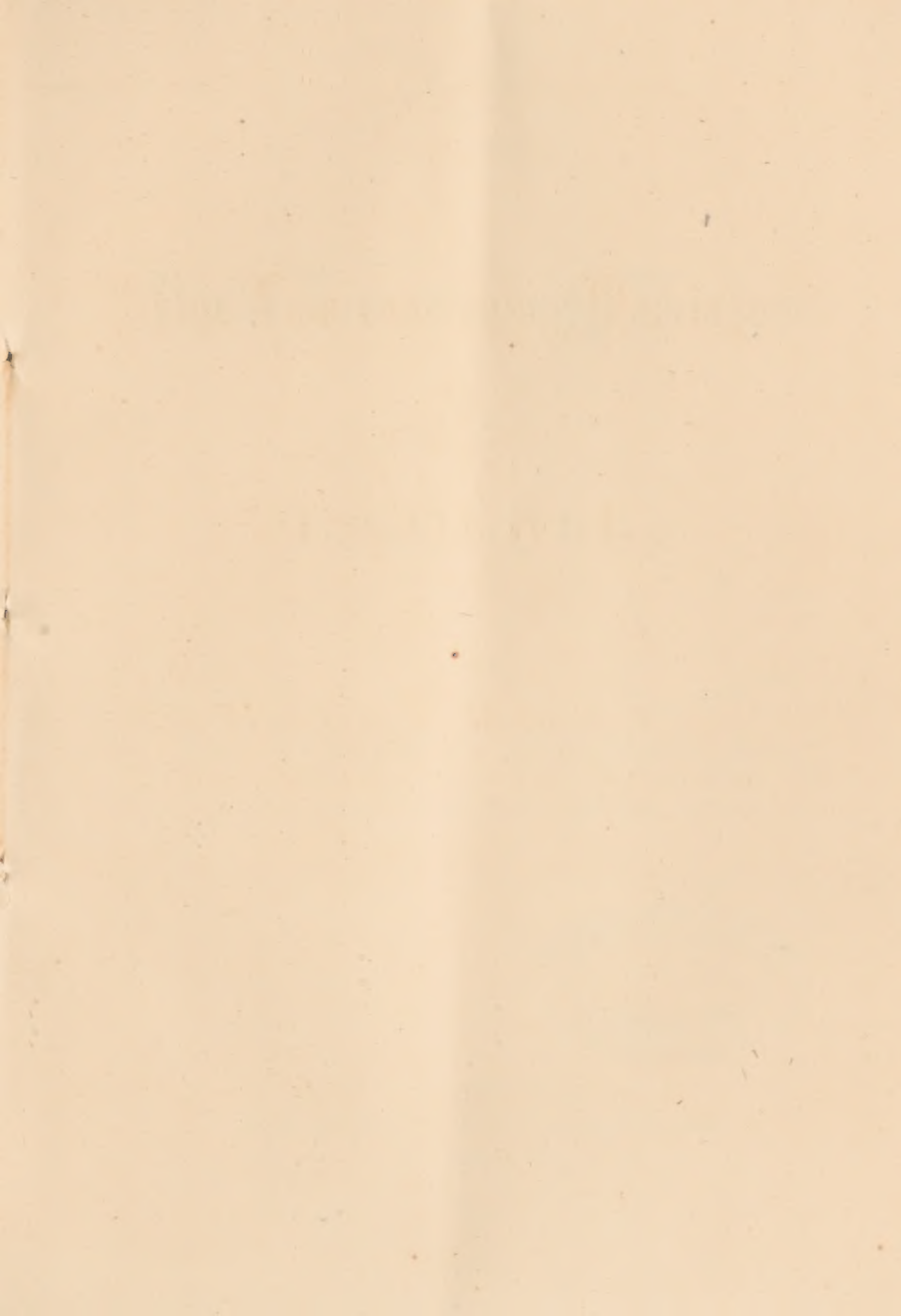
PASTOR THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BOSTON.



BOSTON:

PRESS OF HOLLIS & GUNN, 25 HAWLEY STREET.

1872.



THE HISTORY OF THE

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BOSTON, March 18, 1872.

Rev. Wm. A. McCORKLE, D.D.

DEAR SIR,—We have listened with pleasure and profit to the two lectures delivered by you on the evenings of Sabbaths 10th and 17th current, on "THE DIVINE LAW REGARDING MARRIAGE." The subject not sought by you, but coming in order in your series of "Lectures on Genesis," we admire the frankness with which you have met it, as well as the pungency and delicacy with which it has been treated. We commend you for the same boldness on this matter as manifested by you in the presentation of the grand and glorious truths which more intimately lie in the pathway of the Christian minister. Feeling that the influence of these Discourses should extend far beyond the limits of our own congregation, we respectfully ask you for a copy for publication.

We are, dear sir, very respectfully yours,

JAS. M. SMITH.
JAMES W. MERRIAM.
FRANK HOARE.
E. M. WATSON.
R. MCKENZIE.
CHAS. R. GARDNER.

Messrs. JAS. W. MERRIAM, JAS. M. SMITH, E. M. WATSON, CHAS. R. GARDNER,
R. MCKENZIE, and FRANK HOARE.

DEAR SIRS,—Your note, requesting for publication the Discourses on the subject of Marriage, as established and regulated by Divine Law, which have been delivered on two successive Sabbath evenings, is received. I am quite aware that a careful revision might make the discussion less vulnerable to the shafts of rigid criticism. This, however, pressing duties will not allow. Having, therefore, so arranged the two manuscripts that, in pamphlet form, the discussion will appear as a unit, they are hereby placed at your disposal.

Permit me to hope, with you, that this presentation of the Scriptural standard of marriage may result in good.

Yours truly,

WM. A. McCORKLE.

BOSTON, March 21, 1872.



DISCOURSE.

"AND ADAM SAID, THIS IS NOW BONE OF MY BONES AND FLESH OF MY FLESH: SHE SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN, BECAUSE SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF MAN. THEREFORE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE; AND THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH."—GENESIS ii. 23, 24.

THIS passage of Scripture brings us face to face with a subject of great practical importance; a subject which agitates the public mind to-day in no small degree; about which there is, professedly, wide diversity of opinion, and surely a broader license in practice, on the part of many, than is consistent with good morals, or allowable under any just law, human or divine. In its greatest breadth, the subject is the relation of man and woman to each other; in its more concrete form, it is marriage. To avoid such a subject, coming thus, as it does, in the very pathway of a series of discourses, would be a manifestation of both cowardice and unfaithfulness. He had better lay aside the office of the gospel ministry who is wanting in courage

to utter the truth regarding a subject, because of prevalent diversity of opinion upon it.

Although treated often with lightness, it is a subject of the gravest import. It reaches through all the ramifications of social, political, and religious life. It affects our present happiness and usefulness, and reaches, in its results, into the future state. It is a theme, therefore, for the meditation of the philosopher, for the most careful and just enactments of the statesman, for the clear and comprehensive teachings of the minister of the gospel, and the careful and conscientious consideration of every member of the human race.

One who assumes that there is no Being superior to man, may satisfy himself with a code of human laws by which only the externals of the relation are regulated. The philosopher, looking no deeper into the fountain of truth than unaided human vision can reach, may presume that an observance of principles that he lays down will sufficiently compass the subject; but he who believes that "God created the heaven and the earth," and all the creatures they contain, will have no doubt that a Being of such wisdom and beneficence has made some provisions, and established some regulations, concerning a relation affecting so generally and so permanently the interests of the human family. If He has done so, then the positions that men as-

sume, the enactments of law-making bodies, and the practices that prevail, are right or they are wrong, accordingly as they agree with or stand opposed to what He has said.

Our task, then, is no less, nor is it any less grand in its aim, than to unfold the divine law regarding the relations existing between the two great divisions of the human family—the male and the female.

The first thought, that is brought to us by the divine record, is that it is no accident or happy chance that the human family are divided into males and females; nor is it a fortunate blunder by which they are brought into the intimate relation that subsists between them.

They were intended for each other. To doubt this is to disbelieve the plain statements of the word of God. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” The inference from this language is unavoidable, that man, after his creation, was wanting in some essential particulars. If this want had been in himself, then would he have been the first product of the creative hand which could not be pronounced very good; and, in such case, the remedy would have been in the re-construction and re-endowment of man. But infinite wisdom and infinite power could not be at fault:

man was complete in his organization, and fulfilled perfectly the design of God in his creation. Then, since man was in no sense wanting in completeness for the end for which he was created, the only conclusion to which we can arrive is that so manifestly suggested by the phraseology of the verse just now quoted, namely, that man's need was some creature additional to himself. It was not good for man to be alone; and unless he had been alone, notwithstanding the unnumbered hosts of inferior creatures about him, the use of these words concerning him had been folly.

Whether man had yet realized his need, we are not informed, nor is it important that we should know. He who created him knew it well; and that man would come to know his loneliness and want, if he did not then, is beyond a question. Are we, then, to conclude that the creation of an help meet for man, was an after-thought of the Creator? Was it a finishing out of an attempt that was intended to be complete without that last exercise of creative power? In reply to these questions it is to be said, that He who is possessed of infinite knowledge never has any after-thoughts; hence He cannot begin a work which can only be made complete by an addition to that which was originally intended.

Omniscience embraces the future no less, and apprehends it no less fully and clearly, than it does

the present or the past. Therefore, before the moulding of the clay, and the breathing into his nostrils the breath that made man a living soul, God knew what would be his needs, and also what would be necessary to the completion of His own purposes, as well as He did after man had been constituted ruling lord of all inferior creation. This being the case, the creation of woman can only be looked upon as the completion of a purpose fully matured before man was created, which purpose entered into and formed a part of the great and grand design which induced all creation. Then both were necessary to the completion of the divine purpose; and the divine purpose was to be accomplished through their relation to each other. We are not left to conjecture regarding the fact that the woman was intended for the man. She was to be an help meet for him, and this means a help suited to his wants. The Apostle Paul says, "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." This is evidence clear and explicit. In the meaning of the Apostle, who was speaking of the priority of man's creation as a proof of his position as the head over all things, it was true that man was not created for woman. Yet since both were included in the original purpose of God, admitting that there was a higher design in their creation than the good companionship each

would find in the other, yet, without interfering with the fact of that higher object, there is an important sense in which we may say they were intended for each other.

Here, as well as anywhere, if not better than anywhere else, we may call attention to the institution and origin of marriage. As we have seen, Eve was made for Adam; she was given to him by God himself, and their union received the divine benediction. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." This was marriage. And we have thus brought clearly and forcibly before our minds the fact that marriage is not of human, but of divine origin; that it is not the outgrowth of a fallen state, but belongs to, and constitutes a part of, that holy and perfect condition in which man was originally placed. It is not an invention of man; it is not the discovery of experience; it is not a safety escapement for the foulness of a fallen state. The history of its beginning is not far down in the calendar of time. It is not something that was permitted because of the wickedness of the race, nor is it something that God commanded when He saw only such a command could relieve the race from an augmentation of already accumulated sin. It is in no way, nor in any sense, of human origin; nor is it an outgrowth

of, or a preparation for, a fallen state. On the contrary, we have all the evidence we can possibly have, that it was a part of the divine plan, which was finished in all its particulars before the putting forth of the first exercise of creative efficiency. It was intended that marriage should belong to a state of holiness; and the proof of this is in the fact that it made its first appearance in such a state, and by the ordering of God himself. No sooner was there a man and a woman than there was a marriage. And the institution is lifted to an exalted position, and there is thrown about it a mantle of sacredness, by the fact that God himself solemnized the first marriage.

And that the union of the first pair was not exceptional in its character, but that it was in accordance with a law which was intended to be of universal application, is clearly evinced by the statement contained in the second verse of our text: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." This phraseology has no limitations except to the human race. If it had been intended to say only that Adam should cleave to his wife, the thing would have been easier and better said in very different words. And what folly in saying that a man should leave his father and mother, who never had a father or a mother! Adam

had no one to forsake, and there was no one to whom he could cleave except her whom he recognized as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. There was little danger in his case. The only reasonable conclusion is that the union of the first pair, then consummated, was assumed as a basis upon which to predicate a law, general in its character, and intended to affect all who should come after them. And scarcely any clearer evidence could be given of the necessity and importance of the law, and of the interest felt in the subject by the Law-Maker, than the fact that, in the very beginning, before there were any to whom it could apply beside the two who were to be the progenitors of the race, it was promulgated.

Having established the fact that the institution of marriage was of divine origin; that it was not an after-thought, made necessary by the fall, but belonged to a holy state; and that it was based upon and upheld by a distinctly announced general law,—it may be thought by some that a complete argument would require us to show that it has outlived the holy state, and that the law regarding it is binding since the fall. Passing by the abundant proof of the continued authority and binding nature of the divine law, regarding marital relations, contained in the Old Testament, let us give our attention to the distinct re-assertion of it found in the New Testa-

ment. Much that is written in the Old Testament has been superseded by the teachings of the New. Whatever has not thus been superseded, or fulfilled, stands as firmly and is as binding to-day as ever before. This law of marriage was regarded to be of so much importance, and so great has been the inclination of men in all ages to tamper with it and seek escape from its restraints, that our Lord himself, when in the flesh, took occasion to reiterate it. When the Pharisees came to him with the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him," He asked them, what Moses commanded them. They replied, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Was there ever a plainer and more marked reiteration of a law than that? The conditional release from the strictness of the original law, which had been permitted under the Mosaic code, was taken away; and in all its primary power, and with scarcely a departure from the language in which it had been promulgated when there were only Adam and Eve

to hear it, the divine law concerning marriage was reaffirmed by our Lord. And in plain and scathing rebuke of men's interference with it, and sweeping down through all time in its burning indignation against all after-meddlers, is the added declaration of our Lord, in the words, "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." It is as safe to assume that God has abdicated the throne, as to assert that this law is not binding. If he has any law in force, this law is in force.

We are now required, by our subject, to turn our attention to the relations which persons, united by marriage, necessarily sustain to each other. This is made doubly forcible because brought before our minds in two ways. It was no empty or unmeaning wonder that was performed in the creation of Eve from one of Adam's ribs. She could as easily have been formed of clay as Adam. Why was she not? Then Adam could not have said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;" nor would the expression, "and they shall be one flesh," have been so strongly emphasized. The circumstance of the woman's creation from a rib of the man, and the declaration that those who were married should be one flesh, teach the same thing; and that is the oneness of husband and wife. Both the nature of marriage, and the teaching of the Scriptures, impress upon us that this oneness is the great fact, the

important duty, and the high privilege of the relation. What, then, are we to understand that it consists in? It requires but little argument to show that the expression, "they shall be one flesh," is no less figurative in meaning than was the taking of a rib from the side of Adam from which to create Eve. The word "flesh" here is used as it is in some other Scriptures. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," is language merely expressive of the fact that the Son of God took upon him our nature, and dwelt in a body like our own. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," simply means that no sinner can find justification by obedience to the divine requirements. The word flesh, in such a connection, does not mean the body alone, but the individual; and relates particularly to the responsible part of the man, or the spirit that abides in the flesh, and is affected by the appetites and ailments of the flesh. No two bodies can be made one body, nor can any two spirits be made one spirit; nor is it the intent of the Scriptures to intimate that such is the case. And yet most seriously and impressively is it taught, that they who are united in wedlock are made one. The teaching of the Scriptures is that they are brought into the nearest and most endearing possible relation to each other. Everything that before separated between them is taken away. Until then

they were following separate paths; now they walk in one. Before, they had separate aims; now they have one aim. Before, their interests were divided; now they are united. Before, each clung to those who gave them birth as their natural dependence, their proper counsellors, and their dearest loved ones; now they cling to each other, and each becomes to the other dependence, counsellor, and dear one. Before, they were parts of separate households; now, they have come together, and constitute the united head of a new household. The man forsakes his father and his mother, and not any less does the woman forsake father and mother: not that either one becomes any less dutiful and affectionate in filial relations, but that they are now so one that their engagements and pursuits are no longer a part of the paternal home, but begin and end in their own home.

It will hardly escape a thoughtful mind that, if this oneness is only in externals, marriage will be little more than the iron chain by which two marble images are bound together, or the fetters which forbid two prisoners to divide company. The oneness of Scriptural marriage contemplates a harmony of spirit. Persons who do not think alike, who do not feel alike, who have no community of purpose or pursuit, can never be one, except in the eye of human law; unless, indeed, they are fortunate

enough to grow into a oneness by necessary contact. There must be congeniality of spirit, harmony in regard to matters of principle, similarity of taste, singleness of aim in life, unity of faith, and a mutual love that will make each necessary to the other, and which will find pleasure in sacrifices for the good each of the other. When there is this unity of mind and heart, external matters will easily adjust themselves in perfect harmony. The union of two such persons in marriage is like the putting together of the two parts of a perfect circle. It is not an attempted welding together, under a white heat, of two distinct and foreign bodies: the oneness, which was before wanting, is *made* by the union. They would have been separate and incompleated halves without the union. Within the completed circle, made complete by the marriage of two such, all the interests that they both have are included, and so intermingled and united that they cannot be separated or distinguished. Two minds so direct in that house, that it is as if one mind only controlled; two hearts so blend, that it is as if there were the pulsations of but one. The world is obligated to look upon that family and home as a unit, and he who presumes to do otherwise is an enemy and a slanderer. Before God, and in the eye of the divine law, they twain are one.

+ This part of our subject would hardly be complete without some reference to the distinct spheres of the man and woman within the circle of this oneness.

This is too broad a theme to be enlarged upon here; nor is it easy to mark distinctions where there is such close and intimate oneness. It is to be said, however, that, to a certain extent, distinctness of sphere is in perfect accord with the unity of which we have spoken. We can, however, do little more now than lay down general principles, which, if properly applied, will suit themselves to specific cases in unending variety. These general principles we shall find in the organization of the two, and in the declarations of Scripture.

It is of the utmost importance that we should now keep our minds fixed upon the fact that we are considering what each shall do concerning interests that are undivided and indivisible. They are both, and they are equally, interested in all that is to be done, and their interest is one. The question we propose is, What is the separate sphere of each in this community of interest? A plain and comprehensive answer to this question may be given in the words,—they should severally employ themselves in the sphere for which they were made. I am aware that it may be replied to this, that they are, in very many respects, capable of the same

engagements. This may be admitted, and it may further be said that, in many respects, their sphere of activity may be interchangeable. But this admission leaves a very broad ground for the general principle which we have just stated. Woman, with her delicate and modest nature, her tenderness of heart, her no less capable but differently constructed intellect, and her slender physical organization, is illy suited to very much for which man, by his bolder spirit, more rugged nature, larger and stronger physical frame, and his characteristic mental endowments, is specially adapted. On the other hand, the gentle tenderness, the deep love, the intuitive perception, the gracefulness and inimitable deftness of woman will make her supreme, where man, with all his courage, strength, and depth of character, would only be a clumsy blunderer. But it will be asked, Are there not masculine women and effeminate men? Yes; and so, too, there are trees covered with excrescences, and men and animals that are deformed. This is their misfortune. You cannot lay down a general law by them. If a man has a woman's nature, he is not to be a rule for men; nor is a woman, who has a man's nature, to set herself up as a standard for women.

God made them male and female, intended them for different spheres of activity, and has made a broad and distinguishing difference between them,

by which each is made capable of excelling within an allotted department; and so marked is this division, that it alone, if nothing else, will ultimately settle questions which, in our day, are regarded by some as being unsettled.

But our business is not so much to philosophize, as to unfold the divine law upon the subject. And what do we find there? A clear and full confirmation of what we cannot but infer from the organization of the two. Adam is created and endowed with his sovereignty over inferior creation, and then Eve is brought upon the scene as an help meet for him. Hers is not a servile position, nor is there the slightest intimation that it was any less honorable or important than man's. She was one with Adam, and was a part of all he did. He exercised his powers as much for her as for himself. The efforts of the two blended, and became one. But yet there is no escaping from the fact that man was set in the position of lord of creation, and woman's place, as assigned by her Maker, was that of an help meet for man. Was this an accident? He who made us is not subject to accidents. Was the case of the first pair exceptional in this particular? But we find, throughout the word of God, that they were regarded as the federal head, and in all respects the representatives of the race. It would be very awkward, and no less unfortunate, for us to deny

their representative standing; and if our representatives in any thing, surely they were in this. There can, therefore, be no question that we have, in this, a general principle, whose application is to be confined to no class of persons or period of the world.

But the subject is brought to our attention under another form; and in that form there will be presented to our minds the teachings of the New Testament regarding it. Our Lord represented himself, and is represented by his inspired servants, under the semblance of a bridegroom; and the Church is represented as being the bride. John the Baptist, in giving his testimony concerning the Messiah, said, "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom which heareth Him rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." And in the Revelation we have these words: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." This bride—the Lamb's wife—we know to be the Church, and the Lamb we know to be Christ. What could have suggested the use of this figure, if it was

not the relation which God recognized as existing between the husband and the wife? He employed a relation that was well established, and ought to be well known, to illustrate a relation that needed to be known. The effect of it is to affirm that Christ stands related to the Church very much as the husband stands related to the wife; and that Christ and the Church are related to each other as the husband and wife are related. Now take the reflection of this figure, and what does it teach concerning the relation of husband and wife? Certainly not that it is indifferent. The Apostle Paul brings it out clearly in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church. And further along in the same chapter we find these words: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Here, surely, are brought out, with unmistakable clearness and emphasis, the two facts concerning which we

have been speaking, — man's headship, woman's position as helpmeet for man, and the complete oneness of the two.

Words added to this inspired language would scarcely make the subject clearer, or give greater force to the truth affirmed. The bible must be, not simply neglected, but flatly denied, in order to maintain a position different from this in regard to the relation subsisting, by divine appointment, between the man and the woman.

Let us now follow the light we have obtained, respecting the separate spheres appropriate to the man and the woman within the circle of their complete oneness, as it makes revelations concerning relations somewhat more specific than those we have yet considered, not, however, departing from the general features of the subject. Woman is clearly justified in maintaining the position of modest and self-protecting retirement which, with rare exceptions, is her choice; whilst man is put forward to meet whatever of contact is to come from the world. He, and not she, is to be known as the representative and defender of that oneness which it takes them both to constitute. It will surely not be his own strength alone that he will wield. As the separate strands are so interwoven as to give size and tenacity to the one cord, in like manner

their separate capacities will be so blended that their united force will be represented and exercised through their appropriate and divinely appointed channel. We are not to inquire which of the two adds most to the united strength, any more than we are to unravel the cord to learn which of the strands has the most tenacity. If they are proper yoke-fellows, the larger measure of it ought to belong to the man. But this will not always be the case. In many instances, far the larger share of it will be contributed by the woman. But the world is obligated to regard their strength as a unit, and to look upon the man as the official representative of that undivided, and not to be divided efficiency.

And this prepares the way for us to affirm that woman is relieved of all public exhibitions of herself, and especially from all exercise of rule except that which is appropriately hers, and must be exercised by her within the limits of her own home. If she had been appointed to mingle amid the jostlings and strifes of public debate, and to become an aspirant and contestant for place, then it would have to be said that she had been unfairly dealt with by Him who made her. For, however much may be said to the contrary, and with a full admission of her exalted gifts, it is yet to be said, nor is there successful denial of the fact, that the peculiarity of her gifts puts her at a positive disadvantage in contests of such a nature.

Therefore, the provision by which, in some nations, women are lifted to the supreme place of power, and forced to undergo the discomfort of public displays, and do men's work in the wearing of a crown and the swaying of a sceptre, is in conflict with the animus both of her nature and of the teaching of revelation. If it is imperative that royalty shall descend through, and be confined to, a particular line, then she who may, in certain contingencies, inherit a crown, should be permitted to put it upon the head of him whom she deems worthy to be her husband; and, having thus rolled upon him the burdens of the State, she should have the privilege of taking the place, for her more congenial and queen-like, of an help meet for him.

As it regards the Church, which is the special object of divine solicitude, the principle involved in woman's original organization, and announced upon her presentation to man, is maintained. God set apart kings, priests, and prophets to their official duties by anointing; but there is no record in all the Old Testament that official oil was poured upon the head of one of the daughters of Israel. We find the term "prophetess" in both the Old and New Testaments; but it need hardly be said that either the foretelling of events, or the giving of instruction does not necessarily make it an official position, as was the priesthood. In very rare instances was

there any thing indicating that publicity attended the exercise of the gifts belonging to those who bore the title of prophetess. Much too rare are the instances of such publicity to furnish ground upon which to predicate the belief that public services, on their part, were sanctioned by the Jewish Church. There is room for supposing that in most cases, possibly in all, their prophesying was strictly of a private and womanly character. In the New Testament we are told that Anna was a prophetess; that she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And we are told, also, that she spake of our Lord to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. But then it should not be forgotten that she was a widow of great age. Being without home of her own, having long ago laid in the grave those that were dear to her, and being characterized by an eminent degree of piety, her devotion and her decrepitude led her to abide where she could enjoy all the services of God's house; and when she had seen the Child who was born to deliver sinners from death, just as any noble woman would, she told all whom she met of the glorious news. Both Elisabeth and Mary prophesied; but there is the clearest evidence that it was strictly private in its character; nor did they once think of leaving the retirement of their homes, or of forsaking the care

of their families. The only publicity about Anna's prophesying was the fact of her being always in the temple; and of that fact we have seen that there is easy and sufficient explanation.

The Apostle Paul speaks in his usual terse and powerful way upon the subject. There are many who treat Paul's teachings, in this regard, with a levity and disrespect which, considering that after all it is not Paul but God who speaks, trenches closely upon, if it does not actually become, blasphemy. He who can lightly esteem the Apostle's teaching upon this subject, ought not to balk at ridiculing any thing that he has written. He who can explain it away or set it aside by the assumption that his teaching, in regard to this particular subject, was suited only to the times of the apostles, and that good order and decency do not require the same of us that was required of those to whom the Apostle wrote, may prepare himself for the setting aside of any other part of the Epistle to the Corinthians which may not happen to suit evil-minded men. And if one part can be given up, the whole Epistle may be dispensed with; and if the Epistle to the Corinthians can be blotted out, so may the Bible; and thus infidelity, and his majesty who is the father of infidelity, will have undisputed sway.

The Apostle shows himself to have been quite in earnest about the matter; for he not only men-

tioned it, using the most emphatic terms, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, but also incorporated the same sentiment in one of his Epistles to Timothy, which was to serve as a guide to him in the exercise of his ministry. This clearly shows that he was not moved to write as he did to the Corinthians only by a disturbed and disorderly state among them, but that he was dealing with a general question, and laying down a principle which was to govern a minister of the gospel wherever and whenever his services might be required. And the minister who can consider himself justified in ignoring this part of Paul's charge to Timothy, may leave out the whole, and assume, broadly and definitely, that we have no scriptural warrant and standard for a charge to a man about to enter upon the solemn and responsible work of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In order that the whole teaching of the Apostle upon the subject may be before our minds, and that we may see clearly the generalness of its character, we will quote both passages, taking first that found in the Epistle to the Corinthians. These are the words: "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the

church." In his instruction to Timothy he uses this language: "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." If the Apostle was dealing with a temporary and a local question, why does he thus go back to the beginning, and lay it upon the same broad basis where are predicated all those grave and weighty matters wherein our first parents stood as the representatives of the race? The skill that can explain such language away—permit me to say with due respect to the worthy men who disagree with the views I am forced to hold upon the subject—need not fear to evade any that the Apostle has made. The Apostle does not assume or intimate that women are not sufficiently intelligent to speak in the church; but his language does imply with clearness, that it seems to me ought to be unmistakable, that to do so is to step out of their appropriate and appointed sphere, and is therefore unseemly and disorderly.

With this plain and forcible teaching of the Apostle Paul, this whole feature of our subject must be, and with safety may be, dismissed.

Thoroughness in the treatment of our theme requires us to say a word regarding attempted disturb-

ances of the oneness existing between the man and the woman, or even intimations that, within the circle of that oneness, they have or can have divided interests. It is to be said, emphatically and without qualification, that all such attempts or insinuations are a direct movement upon the family relation, and therefore at war with the best interests of the race. If what we have before said is true,—and surely it is not without scriptural foundation,—then such sentiments cannot prevail without disturbing the oneness created and made sacred by marriage. If the man has interests and personal matters that he claims are his to the exclusion of his wife, then he and his are not wholly hers. If the woman sets up a claim to privileges and possessions in which her husband has no part, then she and hers do not belong wholly to him. To enter the marriage state with any such holding back of part of the price is to violate the very spirit of it, and put dishonor upon it. It is to make it a venal matter; something that does not rise above bargain and contract. It would give scope to the exercise of sharpness and shrewdness, in order that each might see how much was to be gained, and how little lost, by the contract. It needs no prophet's ken to see what will be the result of such a marriage. There is no blending of hearts there; there is no flowing together of two streams constituting one stream;

there is no joining together of two parts of one whole in that. Such a union, if it is worthy to be called a union, is a caricature and a prostitution of the divinely-appointed ordinance of marriage, and can lead only to unhappiness, if not to disgrace and final separation.

And scarcely less damaging is the prevalence of such sentiments upon the peace and happiness of homes already constituted. The hope is that they will find the doors of all American homes, at least where unanimity and happiness dwell, shut and barred against them. Just in proportion as they gain prevalence, except it be merely as a theory, a partition is run through the house, on one side of which is the husband's territory, and on the other side the wife's. That is a divided house; and we have the highest possible authority for saying what comes of such a state. There is no provision in the divine law for the convenient putting together, and the equally convenient putting apart, of two separate interests. Marriage, under that law, is not a partnership; it is not an agreement that, on certain well-understood conditions, two will put their interests together for mutual convenience, — all the while each maintaining a selfish *surveillance* over that which is yet considered a separate and individual claim. It makes the two one; and it makes them one without contemplating the question of their becoming

two again while they shall continue in the flesh. And now what is likely to be the effect, what is scarcely less than sure to be the result, of these two permitting the phrases mine and thine to come within the circle of that sacred oneness constituted by the divine law? Instead of a blended and unified putting forth of strength to push forward one interest, there is a division of aim, strength, and effort. More, even, than that: there is a setting over, each against the other, of two parts of an efficiency that ought to be one. There is a wastage of capacity in guarding against encroachments, one upon the other, when there ought to be no encroachments. Jealousy will scarcely fail to gain a footing in that house; distrust and heart-burnings will be known; and the marriage bond, if not actually sundered, will become no more, nor any less, than a galling chain. Let it not be considered an innocent or an indifferent thing, then, to teach men and women that, in the marriage state, they have or can have separate interests. Such teaching awakens dissatisfaction, and creates restlessness; tends directly to weaken the marriage bond by making it a mere partnership sustained only by human law. It aims at a disavowal of the sanctity of the relation by a denial of its divine origin and sanction; and, if permitted to reach its legitimate results, will, in many cases, rend asunder, and leave torn and bleeding, all the tender and endearing ties of home.

It is an attack upon interests that are sacred and of incalculable value. It imminently imperils the family relation. Beware of its insidious influence. Guard against its damaging and irreparable results.

We are brought now, in the prosecution of our subject, to a consideration of the binding nature of the married relation. This has manifestly appeared in every part of the discussion, but its importance demands a separate and definite consideration.

There can be no question that there has grown up in our country, and is yet increasing, a laxity in regard to marital relations. Our days are not as were the days of our fathers in this respect. Cupidity, lasciviousness, the doctrine of separate interests, false systems of belief, infidelity, the reflex influence of Mormonism, and the spiritism monstrosity cropping out into free-loveism, have come in upon us like a flood, and have brought forth their bitter and baleful fruit. Public sentiment has been toned down in regard to the sanctity of the marriage bond. The violators of it receive but slight rebuke, and easily find admission within the pale of respectable society. Liberties are taken, and with increasing boldness, by those who have sworn before God to be one flesh. Men and women, who, from any cause, find themselves uncongenial to each other, feel at liberty, for trivial reasons, to seek a separation. Our laws are so

constructed as to make the severance easy; and our courts of justice, with honorable exceptions, undo bonds which God has made, with a facility, an indifference, and an assumption of supreme authority, that would characterize their decisions upon questions of right in property. Persons of decency and character, whose homes have been broken up under the influence of this low public opinion, have felt at liberty to seek release from their unfortunate condition, and form new alliances on no higher principles than that which furnishes a basis for our secular laws; whilst the shameless and unprincipled have openly and blatantly proclaimed their liberty, even to a degree that would put them on a level with the brutes.

And is the nuptial cord so loose and frail as this? Can any one bound by it escape from it at will? And is any man who wears the ermine competent to untie the cord? It is not always true that human law can rightly undo what it has done. It may establish relations which, having once existed, cannot again be severed without serious injustice. It is a principle, however, so plain that the smallest reasoning capacity ought to perceive it, that human law is competent to do no more than annul its own acts. The question, then, as to whether human law alone has to do with the institution of the marriage relation,

presents itself to our minds as one of the first magnitude. If it is the only authority that speaks in the consummation of marriage, then it is competent to dissolve the relation. We have, all through this discussion, held prominently in view the fact that marriage is more a divine than a human institution; that human law, indeed, does little more than ratify the divine law. And that the divine law enters, with a supremacy over human law, into every case where the marriage relation is consummated, we have proof, that is beyond the possibility of contradiction or misunderstanding, in the words of our Saviour to the Pharisees, — “What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” Here is an assertion, clear and explicit, that in every case where two parties enter into the marriage relation, God Himself, who made them, seals the bond. Not in the same way, yet not any less really than in the case of Adam and Eve, are they married and made one by Jehovah. The Saviour predicates his declaration upon the very same principle announced when the first nuptials were solemnized, and God Himself uttered the benediction. And this declaration, we must not forget, is by Him who made the divine law, to whom we are all to answer for our violations of that law. Then, whilst the human law is binding in the matter of

marriage, and should never be violated with impunity, it is not the only binding force. There is a concurrence, in the actings of the divine and the human law, in each case of marriage.

This being the case, what must be said about the annulment of the marriage relation? Can one law undo that which it required both laws to consummate? The human law must act, or in the eyes of men there is no divorcement; upon that point, there is no debate. But is the human law alone competent to untie the cord and let the parties go free? In other words, can the human law rise up in opposition to the higher, the holier, the divine law, and separate parties that it has made one? Hear the words of our Lord in answer to that question: "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Not alone for those crafty and malicious Pharisees were these words uttered. It is as if our Lord uttered them to-day, at every altar where two pledge themselves to be one flesh; it is as if He spoke the words again, day after day, in every home; it is as if He reiterated them with solemn emphasis in every legislative hall; it is as if He pronounced them with grave, profound, and portentous meaning within the halls of every earthly court, — "WHAT THEREFORE GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER."

Plainly, then, since there is a concurrence in the actings of the human and the divine laws in order to the consummation of marriage, there must also be a concurrence in the actings of the two laws in order to its annulment. It comes, then, to this: whatever may be the enactments of legislatures, or the decisions of human courts, unless the action is based upon the principles laid down in the divine law, *there is no true divorce-ment. God holds the parties to be as truly husband and wife after as before the action.* They may be released from responsibility each for the other in worldly affairs, but in the eye of the divine law they are yet one flesh.

What, then, are the principles upon which there is release from the marriage bond in accordance with the law of God? They are two. One—that which we may perhaps assume is self-evident—is mentioned by the Apostle Paul by way of illustration. These are the words: “For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law of her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man.” This is simply an

announcement of a fact well understood before, — that death breaks the bond, and gives the living party the privilege of a second marriage.

The one principle upon which the marriage bond can be severed in accordance with the divine law, both parties being yet alive, is laid down by our Saviour Himself, in these words: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you That whosoever shall put away his wife save for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." There is yet another passage to which it is well we should refer. It is found in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, seventh chapter, fifteenth verse: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace." This expression of the Apostle was called out by the disturbed state produced in households where one of the parents had become a Christian, and the other was filled with enmity on that account. It was presumed, and inferentially affirmed by the Apostle, that the Christian, whether the husband or the wife, would not seek a separation. If the unbeliever forced a separation, because a higher claim even than the sacred ties of marriage had

been recognized to Christ, the believer could not be held responsible. The breaking up of the home was not the Christian's act. The believer was not obligated to live with a party who would not live with him. But there is no intimation here of liberty to contract a second marriage. The most that can be made of the passage, and that it plainly affirms, is that when parties *cannot* live together they may live separate; and the responsibility of the separation is with the one making it necessary. The law, as laid down by our Saviour, is not disturbed, but remains in full force. Paul is not giving liberties that Christ did not give. Christ is the lawgiver, not Paul. Now it matters not whether it is Jewish, Roman, English or American law that divorces parties on any other ground than the one He has laid down, the divorcement puts them in the guilty standing-place depicted by His words.

If adultery has been committed, there is not the shadow of a doubt as to the liberty of the innocent party in the premises. Both the human and the divine law give an emancipation from the marriage bond, with full liberty to contract a second marriage. There is, then, a concurrence of all the powers that constituted the relation, in its complete annulment. Not only is there liberty to the innocent party in such a case, but there arises a serious question whether a proper understanding of the married

state, and a proper regard for it, do not require the innocent to seek a separation from the guilty. In the eye of the divine law unfaithfulness to the marriage bond is the one act that severs the cord by which husband and wife are bound, tears asunder the sacred oneness which before subsisted, and makes them twain again. They are one yet in the eyes of the human law, because it waits for the rendering of proof and the forms of courts; but God's omniscience watches, with a jealous eye, over every union that He has made, and therefore takes cognizance of the fact the very moment the foot is planted in the path of sin. From that moment, in the court of heaven, the foul and guilty soul is no more regarded as constituting a oneness with the innocent partner to the marriage bond. And, since the divine law comes in between them, why should they live in semblance of wedlock, after the guilt has become an unquestionable fact, any more than the unmarried?

Properly understood, and properly observed, the marriage relation brings unnumbered blessings, and happiness without measure; misused, prostituted, and dishonored, it will be a source of pain and bitter grief. The oneness of the husband and wife, as foreshadowed in the creation of the woman, and repeatedly affirmed in the Scriptures, and a recognition of God's interest in marriage, and purposes

through it, are the essential conditions upon which its blessings are to be enjoyed. Division, discord, and a disavowal of God's claims and authority, are the sure path to bitterness and sorrow.

Let the idea, that the marriage tie is a loose and flimsy thing, be for ever abandoned. No bond, existing among members of our race, is equally sacred and indissoluble. Let the man or the woman tremble who seeks to escape from it for a reason not recognized by the divine law.

May our statute books be purged of laws granting divorce on other than scriptural grounds; may our courts cease to be engines for the cleaving asunder of bonds that God has made; may the judicial bench be made inapproachable by any but men having a reverence for God's law, that would utterly forbid their severance of the marriage bond except when God would sever it; and may our American homes ever be examples of unity, harmony, and happiness.

In closing this subject permit me to call attention, briefly, to a few thoughts which could not, conveniently, be treated in the body of the discourse.

A command was given, in connection with the first marriage, which is binding in full force upon all who enter the matrimonial state. There is much hesitancy, on the part of ministers of the gospel, about speaking upon the subject of that command, lest they

may be charged with indelicacy. But surely there ought to be courage somewhere; and there ought to be a time and a place to expose and rebuke the crimes that are vitiating the piety of many of our church members, fast making our American homes a desolation, and preparing the way for our country to pass into the hands of the rapidly multiplying Romanists, who descend from immigrants coming to us from the countries of Europe. Many houses that ought to be made sunny and joyous by the merry voices of children, are empty, and gloomy, and lonesome. Only in exceptional cases can this be without guilt. God proposes, through the marriage relation, to populate this world, and through the peopling of this world to gain inhabitants for heaven; and what mortal will dare say He shall not? To enter the married state, and enjoy all its privileges, and yet rob God of one leading purpose He had in the institution of the relation, is to incur culpability that will bear fearfully upon one's future destiny. Who, that has himself been permitted to know the joy of existence, will say that, so far as he is concerned, other beings shall not come into the same joy? Who will say that those who would be bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, who would be immortal spirits, capable through grace of entering into the raptures of heaven, shall never begin to be, and that God shall be robbed of their praise? Look at the child

before you, beaming in beauty and radiant with joy, and think what it would have been to have denied that child existence; and let the thought tell you the measure of the wrong of denying any child existence. I am not speaking now of the human, *yet inhuman* cultures, who support their own worthless existence by preying upon innocents yet unborn. Who would think of preaching to such monsters with the hope of doing them good? May God have mercy upon them, if their guilt has not put them beyond the reach of His grace! Man should visit upon them the severest penalty of human law. No; I am speaking to those who should be fathers and mothers, and are not; and to those whose quiver should be full, and the most they can say is that it is not empty. There is guilt in our homes; but there is hope in the exposure of that guilt; for in many cases it is the result, partly, at least, of ignorance or culpable instruction. Some have spotted their skirts with the blood of their own offspring. When God has begun a work that, undisturbed, will give an immortal soul to the world, there is no moment when He can be stopped in His work without the commission of a crime, that ought to congeal the blood and horrify the soul of one who would be an innocent person.

But feticide is not the only form of wrong that is to be rebuked in this connection; and, having begun, I cannot leave the subject until the whole evil is

exposed. Any thing, willfully done, which interferes with the natural course of events under the divine ordering, and, so to speak, prevents God from doing what he otherwise would do, is not innocent. In that case the creature takes the responsibility of saying when God shall create,—a prerogative that belongs only to God.

It has come about that parents who are surrounded with a troop are looked upon with a feeling of pity,—if they are not made the objects of ridicule,—while those who keep empty houses are congratulated; and mothers, whose hearts should be filled and running over with joy, are made to blush before a false and corrupt public sentiment. It was God who filled those houses with throbbing hearts and happy souls; and the clearest possible proof that those who live there in the bands of wedlock are innocent, is given by the olive plants that cluster around their board. And who will dare to look upon them with a sneer, and insult them with a jest? Let such a public sentiment be forever banished from good society. It has no place in a Christian community. “As arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.”

There is one more thought, that might be greatly

enlarged upon, and cannot be wholly omitted. Some one will say, since the marriage relation is so binding, what is proposed as a relief to the many sorrowful experiences incident to it? Certainly not to make the way of escape from it easier. It is just the facility with which the secular law allows the bond to be severed, that has induced men and women to rush so heedlessly and unadvisedly into the married state. Let them know that when they have plighted their vows there is no way of having those vows unsaid, and there will not be so many foolish and reckless marriages.

The remedy is at the beginning, not at the ending, of the matter. In cases without number, from a false delicacy, or a low estimate of the marriage relation, young people are permitted to grow up without any proper understanding of its solemn character and weighty obligations. They scarcely hear it mentioned except in jest; or if there is any thing approaching soberness, they are led by it to the conclusion that the principal thing to be aimed at is to make what the world calls a good "catch." Parents who were influenced by similar sentiments in seeking a matrimonial alliance, and have never yet risen above them, may be considered as poorly qualified to put their children upon a higher plain than they themselves occupy. But age and experience can hardly fail to have brought with them some degree of

wisdom, even though, in some cases, it may have been found in the dregs of a bitter cup. Let parents know and recognize their responsibility in this respect. They will not be free from culpability if they allow a false and frivolous public sentiment to educate their children in this regard. Schools and academies are not the places for instruction such as a proper preparation for married life requires. Home is the academy, after all, where a child is to be chiefly educated; and especially is it the place where instruction is to be given upon the subject of which we are now treating. Every son and daughter ought to be so informed that they would not be dupes for the designing, nor enter the married state to learn from blunders and misfortunes, and possibly disgrace and separations, what they ought to have been taught under the paternal roof. Let parents awake to their duty in this regard, or the oft-told history of sin and sorrow will continually repeat itself.

From a want of proper education, and from miscellaneous influences, very many enter the married state through false motives. In some cases the object sought is position in society; in cases without number it is wealth. Comeliness of person, vivacity, or sprightliness of intellect will sometimes captivate. When the object most desired is found, there is no careful analysis of character, no comparison of views, for the purpose of learning whether they can be truly

one or not, but every effort is made to consummate a marriage; and never once is there even a dream that, under that glitter of wealth, that beauty of person, or that sprightliness of intellect, there is lurking an uncongeniality of disposition and character that will be as thorns in the path, and manacles upon the soul. Wealth becomes no better than trash, witticisms go for empty sound, and beauty is of no more worth than the showy paint upon a moneyless coffer, when the soul thirsts for companionship or sympathy and finds it not. Marriage is a prison-house, and it is a prison of despair to one who has a sympathizing, thirsting heart, and yet finds no response where a response should be most ready and full. To be bound up in a oneness that is, after all, not a oneness, but a secret and corroding uncongeniality, even though the chain be of gold, comes little short of anguish. Many hearts, in high positions or surrounded with affluence, are to-day pining and breaking over the remembrance of loved ones that might have been theirs, and are not.

And it must be said that such catastrophies, as these of which we now speak, are often directly chargeable to the manipulations of silly fathers and managing mothers. Moved by ambition, or in some cases a narrow selfishness, they deliberately drive a son into an improper marriage, or lead a daughter, bound in chains of gold, as a lamb to the altar of sacrifice.

And it must further be said that the ignorance concerning the marriage relation, and the false motives in entering it of which we have spoken, induce deceptions that lay the foundation for bitter and long-continued repentance. Where there should be perfect frankness, and a full revelation of character, there is a studied effort to make the best possible impression at the sacrifice of truth. Each is looking upon an outside show, a sort of mask, instead of a veritable person. And, through the conventionalities of society, this perpetration of falsehood is made easy. Fashionable life would not be seriously slandered if it were called a masquerade, where men and women meet, and mingle, and converse, and part without knowing each other. When every woman is most careful to keep her leading characteristics concealed, and every man stands guard over his peculiarities, how is there to be an acquaintance that will insure a happy union? And when these mutual deceivers have been made husband and wife by the declarations of human law, and then perforce must remove their masks, who shall tell of the revelations that will be made? Then acquaintanceship is begun; and alas for their fate, when they find they are one only in name!

The discontent and suffering of married life find their origin in these things. The blunderings of the ignorant, the false and unworthy motives of many,

and the deceptions of the crafty, lead to ill-advised and often hasty marriages. Here is where trouble begins. From these muddy and fetid fountains there flows a turbid stream through the whole of many a life. From such a source nothing could be expected but sorrow and suffering. Correct these beginnings if you would remove the miseries of married life. Purify the fountain, and there will be no trouble about the purity of the stream.

Give marriage its true sanctity; cease forever making it a jest and a song; make people intelligent, and, above all, make them honest in their purposes regarding it; tear away the mask, and, through the utmost frankness and thoroughness of acquaintanceship, let them know each other; make principle the foundation of every thing; let there be the existence of a love that cannot be jostled by the adversities of life, nor poisoned by the tongue of slander; and over all this let God's authority be recognized, and upon it all let His blessing be sought,—and divorce courts will have lost their vocation, homes will be happy, and marriage an unmingled blessing.

